Annual Report 1988•89

Alberta
FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

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Alberta
FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Office of the Minister

104 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B6 403/427-2606 Fax 403/427-0954

To the Honourable David J. Carter
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Sir:

We are pleased to present the annual report of Alberta Family and Social Services, which covers the fiscal year ending March 31, 1989.

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Oldring
Minister

Roy Brassard
Associate Minister

Alberta
FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Office of the Deputy Minister

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Honourable John A. Oldring
Minister of Family and Social Services

Honourable Roy Brassard
Associate Minister of Family and Social Services

Sirs:

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Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Stan Remple
Deputy Minister
Family and Social Services

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I. Introduction

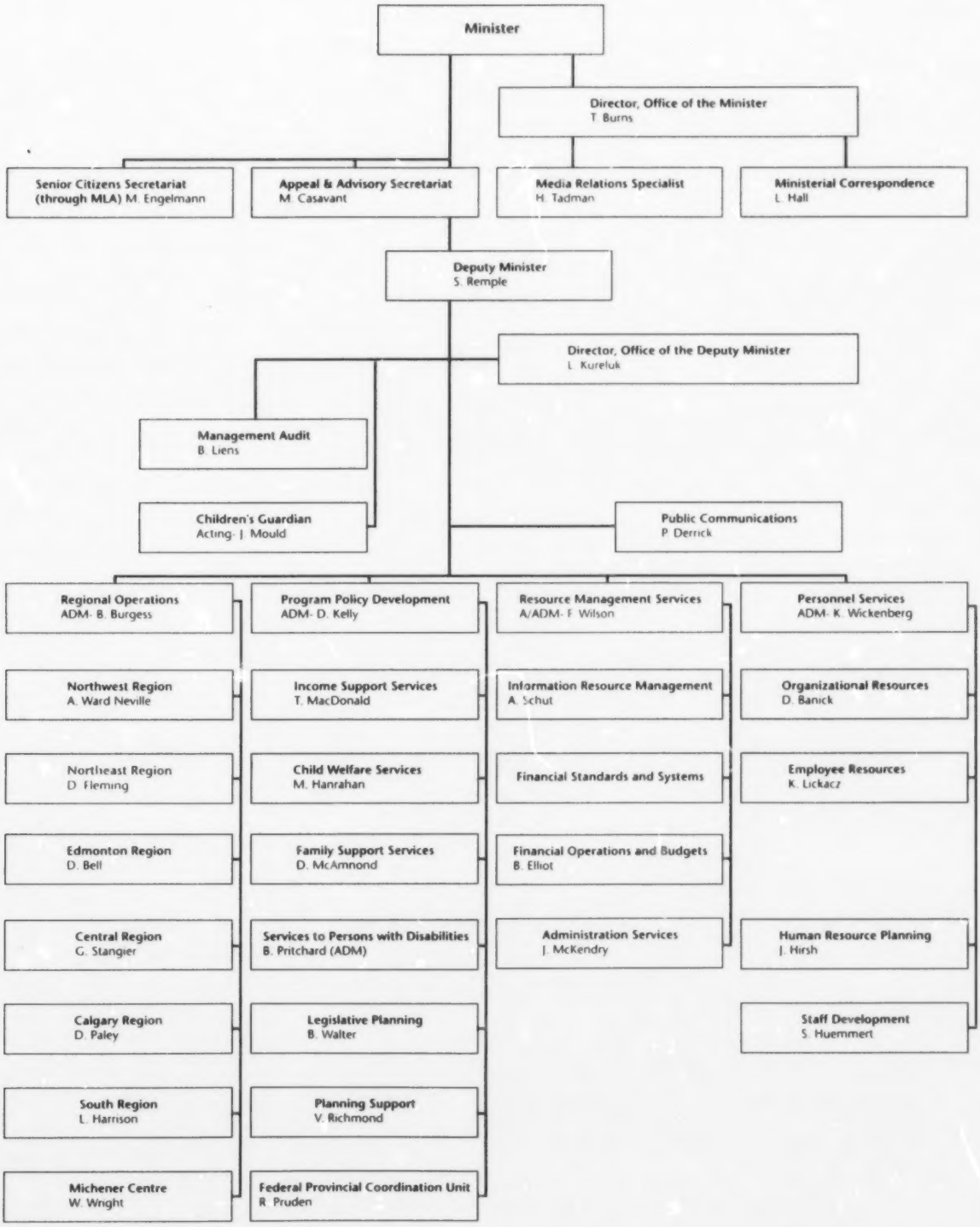
Alberta Social Services exists to protect and promote the social well-being of Albertans. It does this by developing and administering statutory and mandated social service programs which encourage and support individual and family independence and self-reliance. Some of the Department's responsibilities include:

- protecting the safety and legal rights of children and dependent adults, if these rights are threatened;
- covering the basic costs of food, clothing, shelter and care for people unable to meet these needs for themselves or for their families;
- helping people who are dependent on public support or protection to become independent or more self-reliant;
- assisting people who are close to becoming dependent on public support to remain fully independent, or to help them to reduce the degree of support they may require in the future.

The Department is guided by a set of basic principles, which include the following:

- respect for personal worth and dignity;
- recognition of equal human worth; that all have the same human rights and freedoms and should be treated on an equal basis;
- support of personal responsibility and independence, and the freedom of individuals to choose and take responsibility for their decisions;
- belief that the family unit and the community are the best places to resolve problems;
- belief in the importance of prevention and early intervention;
- commitment to quality services; and
- accountability to the public for services provided.

Alberta Social Services



II. Social Services Programs

Alberta Social Services provides two categories of services to clients - financial support and social support services.

The Social Allowance, Alberta Assured Income Plan, Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped, Day Care and Widows' Pension programs are all financial support programs.

The Department also provides social support services for children, adults, and families. Child Welfare Services and the Children's Guardian serve the needs of children, while Day Care, Family Relations, the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence, Women's Emergency Shelters, and Services to Persons with Disabilities all respond to the concerns of families and adults. There are, as well, two secretariats: the Senior Citizens Secretariat and the Appeal and Advisory Secretariat.

Alberta Social Services has increased the use of computer technology to streamline benefits administration, so that staff can spend more time with clients. As well, in order to give clients better services while making the best use of staff resources, a greater emphasis has been placed on individual case planning. Social Services has become more involved with community groups, agencies, and other government departments, in order to plan and deliver the best possible services to clients.

1. Child Welfare Services

The purpose of Child Welfare Services is to ensure that the survival, security and development of children are protected. Services are provided, wherever possible, within the natural family, with the objective of providing permanent, nurturing relationships for children.

Child Welfare Services provides many programs and services to protect, enhance and support the development and functioning of children and their families, in the least intrusive way possible. Emphasis is placed on reducing the number of children coming into the care of Social Services, and on reducing their length of stay in care. Wherever possible, the Department makes use of community-based resources that promote family support and protection.

Investigation, Apprehension, and Supervision services may be required in cases of child abuse or neglect. Reports of abuse or neglect, and requests for assistance by parents or children are investigated by district offices. If the situation can be resolved without removing the child from the home, the child welfare worker may refer the family to an appropriate community resource.

If a child's survival, security or development seems to be endangered, child welfare workers may remove the child from the home to a safe, temporary location, such as a receiving or foster home. (This process, called "apprehension," is governed by procedures under the Child Welfare Act.)

Support Agreements and Supervision Orders are two other services provided by Child Welfare Services. Contractual agreements may be signed by a guardian and the Department (family support agreements), or court orders may allow the Department to supervise the child and guardian in their own home (supervision order). The purpose of a support agreement is to provide support services to a family whose child has been found to be in need of protective services, while allowing the child to remain at home. An example of a support agreement might involve the provision of a homemaker service to a family, where a single parent is found to be neglecting the children.

Support agreements may also be made with a child 16 years of age or over, where the child is living independently of his or her guardian, and the survival, security and development of the child will be protected if the child continues to live independently of the guardian.

Children who are in need of protective services and who cannot be protected in their own home (even through support or supervision) are placed in care. This is the result of an agreement or court order which places the child under the temporary or permanent custody and guardianship of Social Services. Forty percent of the children in the care of the Department are Native.

In March of 1989, the **Foster Care** program was providing support and protection to 2,238 children. If children need protective services, as determined under the Child Welfare Act, the foster care program provides them with a substitute home for the length of time necessary. Since the family is recognized as a basic unit of society, the role of the foster parents as a substitute family is emphasized. Ongoing contact with the natural parents is strongly promoted while children are in foster care.

The **Residential Services Program** provides services to children who, because of emotional or behavioural problems, cannot remain in their own home or in substitute family care. Resources range from residential treatment centres to small community group homes. Some residential resources are operated by the Department, while others are contracted to private operators. Placements require the approval of local child welfare regional placement committees.

There are approximately 81 contracted group homes (with one to six beds) and 26 institutions (with seven or more beds) in Alberta. As of March 31, 1989, there were 480 children in group homes and 497 children in institutions, including residential resources, compulsory care and detention.

The **Adoption** program includes both private and ward adoptions. In both cases, the legal effect of an adoption is that the adopted child becomes the child of the adopting parents, who assume the permanent responsibilities of guardianship, as if the child had been born to the family.

The **Special Advisor on Native Issues** is the Department's main liaison with Native organizations, agencies and communities. Through this office, the Department seeks to strengthen the awareness of Native concerns in social service issues and to cooperate with Native groups in developing social service programs and policies.

Highlights: Child Welfare Services

- **Amendments to the Child Welfare Act were proposed in 1988/89, to include recognition of the rights of unmarried fathers, provision for the operation of licensed private adoption agencies and the creation of the Office of the Children's Advocate.**
- **Policies were revised to reflect changes in the Child Welfare Act, and information brochures were developed to provide the public with information on services to unmarried parents and adoptions in Alberta.**
- **With the help of the Wednesday's Child Program, the Photo-Listing Album and cooperation with the media and the Alberta Association of Professional Photographers, 261 children with special needs were placed in homes during 1988/89.**

The following tables 1-5 represent a "snap-shot" of the number of children receiving services at a given point, not the total number of clients served during the month.

Table 1
Children Receiving Child Welfare Services, as of March 31, 1989

Region	Number of Children
Northwest	797
Northeast	829
Edmonton	3,579
Central	811
Calgary	1,584
South	647
TOTAL	**8,247***

* Note: This figure does not include those children receiving Handicapped Children's Services

Table 2.
Legal Status of Children Receiving Child Welfare Services, as of March 31, 1989

Legal Status	Number of Children
Custody Agreement	941
Family Support Agreement	3,055
Apprehension	102
Permanent Guardianship	2,061
Temporary Guardianship	635
Supervision	362
Other	386
Not Coded	705
TOTALS:	**8,247**

Table 3
Placement of Children Legally in the Care of Social Services, as of March 31, 1989

Placement	Number of Children
Parents' Home	1,183
Relatives' Home	175
Foster Home	2,238
Group Home	417
Adoption Home	168
Residence/Institution	452
Compulsory Care	7
Detention	9
Other	337
Data not available	3,261
TOTALS:	***8,247**

* Note: Does not include children with Handicapped Children's Services status.

Table 4
Contracted Group Homes by Region, March 31, 1989

Northwest	5
Northeast	4
Edmonton	29
Central	6
Calgary	31
South	6
TOTAL	**81**

Table 5
Number Of Children In Institutions by Region, March 31, 1989

Northwest	43
Northeast	26
Edmonton	204
Central	38
Calgary	151
South	35
TOTAL	**497**

2. Children's Guardian

Under the provisions of the Child Welfare Act, the Children's Guardian is the sole legal guardian of children who are subjects of permanent guardianship orders or agreements, and the joint guardian of children who are the subjects of temporary guardianship orders.

The Children's Guardian monitors the services provided to children under guardianship, advocates for change when problems are identified, and makes the major decisions that parents usually make for their children.

In 1988/89, the Children's Guardian was the permanent, legal guardian of approximately 2,000 children.

Highlights: Children's Guardian

- **With passage of the Child Welfare Amendment Act (1988), the Office of the Children's Guardian was asked to participate in the development of the new Children's Advocate program. The Office participated in a task force (including representatives from the community, Regional Operations, and Program Policy Development) which prepared the "Children's Advocate Program Intent Paper", presented to the Minister in November, 1988. The document reflected feedback from community professionals and agencies province-wide, and provided a foundation for the operation of the Children's Advocate program, which is scheduled to begin in 1989/90.**

Table 6
Average Monthly Number of Children for Whom the Children's Guardian had Responsibility

Region	Permanent Guardianship	Temporary	Total
Northwest	211	72	283
Northeast	246	66	312
Edmonton	797	196	993
Central	209	43	252
Calgary	624	150	774
South	135	65	200
TOTALS:	**2,222**	**592**	**2,814**

3. Family Support Services

Day Care

The purpose of the Day Care Program is to set and enforce standards in licensed day care facilities and in contracted family day home agencies. Funds are also provided to day care centres and family day homes, on behalf of the families who use them, through the payment of operating allowances, low-income family subsidies, administrative fees, and funding to help integrate children with disabilities into regular day care.

Day care centres and family day home services are operated on a private sector or community agency basis, by organizations or individuals.

Financial support is provided in the following ways:

- The child care subsidy program provides financial assistance to low income families, whose pre-school children are attending licensed day care centres or approved family day homes. The subsidy helps to pay for child care while parents are working or getting an education, or when a child has special needs. The subsidy is paid to the day care centre or family day home agency. Based on their ability to pay, parents contribute a minimum of $40/ month to the cost of day care. The maximum subsidy is $280/ month.
- The operating allowance paid to day care centres exists to fund enrolled spaces and offset the cost of day care, regardless of parents' income.
- The integrated day care program provides additional funds and advisory services to facilities that care for children with special needs.
- An administrative fee is provided to family day home agencies who contract with Alberta Social Services. The agencies supervise family day homes, which can care for a maximum of six children per home.

Day care facilities are licensed and monitored by regional licensing staff, who also license all other social care facilities in the province (e.g. residences for children and persons with disabilities, foster homes and women's emergency shelters).

In June, 1988, the estimated number of infants to five years of age in Alberta was 247,000. Of these, about 31,000 (12.6%) were in Department-funded child care during 1988/89. Approximately 400 children were served in integrated day care.

(In 1988/89, administrative fees were paid to family day home agencies, to support a monthly average of 5,280 children who were cared for in day homes.) Operating allowances were paid on behalf of approximately 24,500 children in day care centres.

Highlights: Day Care

- **Four brochures were produced for public use and are available through various community resources. They are: Choosing a Day Care Centre (brochure and a checklist) and Choosing Family Day Care (brochure and a checklist).**

- **A comprehensive training and orientation program was developed for both new and experienced provincial licensing officers. It includes individual modules on programming, working relationships, worksite orientation, caseload management and legal issues. The first module on day care programming was presented in March, 1989.**
- **Department staff met with day care operators and family day home agencies to discuss the development of the new child care subsidy manual, which will be introduced in the next fiscal year. The consultations allowed the operators and agencies to present their opinions and concerns about the proposed changes. The revised policy will enhance parental responsibility, provide greater flexibility for parents, and streamline the subsidy program.**
- **A computerized data base for child care programs, the Day Care Information System, was developed and tested. The licensing and family day home components of the system were implemented in 1988/89; the subsidy/claims/payment cycle will be operational early in the new fiscal year.**

Table 7
Facilities (other than Day Care Centres) Licensed under the Social Care Facilities Licensing Act, as of March 31, 1989

Type of Facility	Number Licensed	Capacity
Nursery Schools	458	10,833
Programs for School-Age Children	337	8,257
Adult Homes for Special Care	245	5,107
Children's Institutions	151	1,705
Licensed Foster Homes	111	591
Social Care Facilities	36	206
TOTALS:	**1,338**	**26,699**

Table 8
Licensed Child Care Facilities as of January, 1989

Region	Day Care Centres		Licensed Family Day Homes	
	# of facilities	# of spaces	# of facilities	# of spaces
Northwest	23	980	17	92
Northeast	20	813	9	54
Edmonton	315	14,042	16	91
Central	45	2,074	5	30
Calgary	210	12,151	15	84
South	43	1,963	1	6
TOTALS:	**656**	**32,023**	**63**	**357**

Table 9
Number of Children (monthly average) on whose behalf Operating Allowances were paid to Day Care Centres, 1988/89

Northwest	Northeast	Edmonton	Central	Calgary	South	Total
773	558	11,101	1,717	8,861	1,479	24,489

Table 10
Average Number of Family Day Home Agencies Receiving Administrative Fees, 1988/89

Northwest	Northeast	Edmonton	Central	Calgary	South	Total
11	13	17	13	14	17	85

Table 11
Monthly Average Number of Children on whose behalf Administrative Fees were paid to Family Day Home Agencies, 1988/89

Northwest	Northeast	Edmonton	Central	Calgary	South	Total
310	396	2,047	608	1,290	629	5,280

Table 12
Average Monthly Number of Families Receiving Low Income Subsidy, 1988/89

Northwest	Northeast	Edmonton	Central	Calgary	South	Total*
306	357	5,015	737	2,985	758	10,158

* Of these, 8,508 were one-parent families and 1,650 were two-parent families.

Table 13
Average Monthly Number of Subsidized Children, 1988/89

Northwest	Northeast	Edmonton	Central	Calgary	South	Total
383	407	5,987	888	3,644	918	12,227

Family Relations

This program helps families resolve legal issues related to marital breakdown, including disputes over custody of, or access to, children. It assists families in obtaining appropriate maintenance orders and agreements, when necessary. The program also assists in establishing the paternity of children born out of wedlock.

All applications from separated persons on Social Allowance and all applications for "Children in Need" Social Allowance are reviewed to see whether the person legally responsible to support the family is financially able to do so. Where appropriate, maintenance is either negotiated with the person responsible or, if this should not prove feasible, the responsible parent or spouse is summoned to court on a Department-initiated application for maintenance. All court orders obtained are registered with the Maintenance Enforcement Program, Alberta Attorney General, for collection and enforcement. Any maintenance money paid directly to a Social Allowance client is deducted from the assistance paid by Social Services.

All applications for Social Allowance from unwed mothers are referred to family relations workers, who may either help the mothers to obtain a paternity agreement, or arrange for court appearances to settle paternity and obtain child maintenance. This is mandatory for unmarried mothers who are receiving Social Allowance, but it is also a service offered free of charge to other unwed mothers.

Department staff help individuals to apply to Family Court for custody and/or access orders, in cases where a dispute cannot be settled amicably. Formal mediation and conciliation services are offered, mainly in the Edmonton and Calgary Regions. In some areas, Department personnel assist family members who are making application to the courts under the Mental Health Act, for warrants of conveyance to a psychiatric hospital. Under some circumstances, members of the public may also be helped to lay charges for non-support and for assault or threats, under the Criminal Code.

Upon order of the Family Court, family relations workers carry out professional assessments and home studies, in order to aid the courts in the awarding of custody or access orders.

Highlights: Family Relations

- **Based on the evaluation of the custody mediation project completed in 1987/88, the Edmonton Region's Conciliation Service will now be offered on an ongoing basis. Calgary Region instituted a similar service, effective February, 1989. The service allows divorcing spouses to settle child access and custody disputes outside the courtroom. This can decrease the legal costs for the spouses and avoids court costs.**

Table 14
Average Monthly Family Relations Caseload, 1988/89

Region	Maintenance 1988/89	Court Services	Custody Investigations	Monthly Totals 1988/89
Northwest	650	9	2	661
Northeast	789	47	1	837
Edmonton	5,173	699	49	5,921
Central	1,172	73	2	1,247
Calgary	1,654	138	0	1,792
South	720	136	0	856
TOTALS:	**10,158**	**1,102**	**54**	**11,314**

Prevention of Family Violence

The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence provides support and leadership to people working with victims of family violence and their families. Family violence includes the abuse of women, men, children and the elderly in families. The Office provides information, education and training, consultation and community liaison.

Highlights: Prevention of Family Violence

- **The Minister successfully challenged municipalities, Indian bands and Metis settlements to become involved in family violence prevention, during a month (November) designated for that purpose. Increased media attention to the issue and community projects undertaken during November, increased the public's understanding of the problem and generated interest and support for more involvement in responding at the community level.**
- **The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence updated many of its existing publications and developed new materials, including a poster/pamphlet series on child abuse and abuse of the elderly; a specialized information kit for family violence prevention month; fact sheets on dating violence and child sexual abuse; and a brochure on wife abuse for immigrant women, written in Chinese, Spanish, Polish, Vietnamese and simple English.**
- **The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence hosted a provincial forum on elder abuse in families. The forum was attended by both government and community members concerned with this issue.**

Table 15
Information Requests: The Office For The Prevention Of Family Violence, 1988/89

From April 1, 1988 to March 31, 1989 the Office distributed 104,272 items in response to 1,605 requests for information.

Requests Received from:	% of Total
Professional/Community Organizations	47%
Government	28%
Educational Institutions	8%
Public	11%
Students	4%
Media	2%

Women's Emergency Shelters

This program provides safe, short-term supportive environments for abused women and their children and for other women in crisis. Shelters, which provide 24-hour support services and accommodation for up to 21 days, and second-stage housing, which provides apartment suites for up to six months, are operated by community organizations. Social Services contributes to the cost of basic emergency services in 14 shelters (which provide 286 beds): food, accommodation, essential clothing, emergency transportation and staffing for counselling and child care.

Social Services also funds counselling services in a second stage housing project in Calgary, which provides 14 apartment suites. In addition to Department funding, shelters raise approximately, $1 million annually from other sources, to help cover the costs of such services as public education and outreach programs.

In 1988, about 7,134 women and children were admitted to shelters, which is consistent with the admissions in the 1986 and 1987 calendar years.

Highlights: Women's Emergency Shelters

- **In 1988/89, additional funding of $475,500 was provided to women's emergency shelters to ensure the ongoing operation of all fourteen shelters in Alberta. This increase brings total expenditures to $4.1 million. Further increases are slated for 1989/90, to fully fund basic emergency services in women's emergency shelters.**

- **A standard contract, developed in consultation with the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, was implemented April 1, 1988. The contract clearly outlines the responsibilities of the Minister and the shelters, and ensures consistent application of the funding and program policy.**
- **A research report entitled "Profile of Battered Women Who Use Shelters in Alberta" was produced. It was based on data derived from the Women's Shelter Information System.**

Table 16
Beds Available in Community-Based Women's Emergency Shelters, January to December, 1988

Region	Beds	Admissions Women/Children	Non-admitted Children
Northwest	21	374	300	262
Northeast	46	373	718	266
Edmonton	81	830	1,212	397
Central	35	419	573	157
Calgary	*64	820	1,023	234
South	39	353	384	182
TOTAL:	***286**	**3,169**	**4,210**	**1,498**

* Plus 14 second stage housing suites

Shelters for Homeless Adults

Through this program, temporary accommodations and meals are provided to adults who are temporarily unemployed and in need of assistance. The four community-based and two Department-operated residences throughout the province provide sheltered environments, while helping clients to regain and maintain their health and social functioning skills.

In Edmonton Region, services are provided by two community agencies (Urban Manor and Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre) and by two Department-operated facilities (Single Men's Hostel and Gunn Centre). Gunn Centre provides a longer term program than the rest, for residents unable to benefit from or qualify for other social service programs. In the Northwest Region, the Salvation Army operates a short term facility for homeless men called Wapiti Lodge. Calgary has one short term facility, the Single Men's Hostel, which has been operated by the Salvation Army since January 1989.

Highlights: Shelters for Homeless Adults

- **The Calgary Single Men's Hostel was successfully privatized during 1988/89. The Salvation Army took over the hostel's operations in January, 1989. Sufficient cost savings were realized to help fund another men's shelter: the Calgary Drop In Centre.**

Table 17
Shelters For Adults: Average Annual Occupancy Rates, 1988/89

Region		Bed Spaces	Occupancy (%)
Northwest	Wapiti Lodge	30	80
Edmonton	Single Men's Hostel	249	70
	Urban Manor	70	72
	Gunn Centre	109	88
	Women's Emerg. Accom.	35	80
Calgary	Single Men's Hostel	*162/28	N/Avail
Total Provincial Spaces		**683**	

* In 1989, the capacity of the Single Men's Hostel in Calgary was reduced from 238 to 162 beds, and the third floor converted to 28 mini-units for longer-term accommodation.

Handicapped Children's Services (HCS)

The Handicapped Children's Services program assists families of handicapped children with the extraordinary demands and costs which result from the handicap, so that their children can remain at home. HCS provides funds for a variety of services that are deliverd by community-based groups, including professional practioners. Funds are paid to the family of the child, or directly to the service provider, under an agreement negotiated with the parents by an HCS worker.

94% of the children served by the program live in their family homes. The number of children living outside the family home has been decreasing, which is in keeping with the intent of the program.

Highlights: Handicapped Children's Program

- **A number of initiatives were completed during 1988/89, in order to enhance the effectiveness of the Handicapped Children's Program. These included initiating a Provincial Handicapped Children's Services Program Planning Committee; completing an interprovincial study of programs similar to Alberta's; drafting a program purpose and a statement of principles, with regional input; and a presentation to the Minister, which identified options for parental cost-sharing.**

Table 18
Handicapped Children's Services Cases as of March 31, 1989

Northwest	Northeast	Edmonton	Central	Calgary	South	Total
445	264	1,482	535	1,504	440	4670

4. Income Support Services

Social Allowance

The purpose of the Social Allowance program is to ensure that every person in Alberta who is in need, receives financial and health benefits in order to meet the basic necessities for health and well-being, as defined in legislation. The program encourages Albertans to reach the highest level of financial self-sufficiency that they can.

Social Allowance is the largest single program in Social Services, amounting to slightly more than half the Department's total budget. Social Allowance benefits include payments to clients for food, clothing, household goods and shelter, as well as for other approved needs such as transportation, laundry, telephone, special diets, and coverage for dental, medical, optical and funeral services. Where appropriate, clients are also referred to employment and client support services, which may help them to find work and become financially self-sufficient.

The type and amount of financial assistance granted will depend on the category into which the household head falls. The category also affects whether or not the client will be required to seek or accept employment. The categories are as follows:

- **Employable clients** are required to seek, accept and maintain reasonable employment at reasonable wages.
- **Unemployable clients** are: aged 60 or over; single parents caring for one or more children, falling into specified age or need groups; persons with a physical or mental incapacity; or people who have been formally assessed as being unsuitable for employment. Such clients are not required to seek or maintain employment.
- **Transient clients** are those who do not have a fixed address in Alberta and do not intend to establish a permanent residence in the province. These clients receive limited benefits, to meet their basic needs during transition periods.

- **"Children in Need"** are those whose parents are unable or unwilling to provide care, but who do not require child protection services (as defined under the Child Welfare Act). These children receive benefits, which are paid to a guardian on their behalf.

Expenditures for the basic allowance (food, clothing, household and personal allowance) and the shelter allowance account for approximately 80% of the Social Allowance budget.

Normally, clients are screened when they first apply to one of the more than 50 district offices or sub-offices in Alberta. After this, they have an application interview with a caseworker, during which they are advised about the kind of documentation that they must provide. If necessary, a district office cheque or voucher is issued right away, to meet emergency needs. The regular monthly cheque arrives by mail shortly before the end of each month to allow payment of the next month's rent. About 60% of clients receive their cheques through automatic payroll.

Client reporting cards were introduced in 1988/89, in selected offices, on a trial basis. Clients report monthly, whether their circumstances have changed or not. They advise the Department if they still need assistance. Clients have the right to appeal Department decisions about their benefits to citizens appeal panels. In 1988, 8,124 Social Allowance appeals were heard. This figure is an increase over the 1987 calendar year, when 6,693 appeals were heard.

Fifty percent of the provincial Social Allowance costs are paid by the federal government, under the terms of the Canada Assistance Plan.

More than one-third (37%) of the Social Allowance caseload is made up of single parent families, of which 96% are headed by women. About one-quarter of the single parents are working part-time or full-time and need to have their employment income subsidized. Another 25% are seeking employment. About two-thirds of all recipient families are headed by a person under 35 years of age; another 5% are headed by a person aged 60 years or older.

About 15% of Social Allowance clients are not required to seek employment, due to physical or mental handicaps. Most of the people in this group are single. More than 2,000 of them qualify for Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped, but also need Social Allowance money because of exceptionally high expenses related to their disability or because they support families.

Of all cases, 36% are termed employable. About 17% of these are already employed part-time or full-time and need to have their earnings subsidized to meet the basic needs of their families. About two-thirds (64%) of the employable clients are single, and of these, 70% are men.

Highlights: Social Allowance

- **The provincial Social Allowance average monthly caseload dropped to 67,732 (down approximately 1% from 1987/88) in 1988/89, excluding benefits for children in need and transient clients. The average monthly caseload for the Social Allowance with handicap benefit, increased by 27% (from 1,343 in 1987/88 to 1,701 in 1989/90). The average cost per case rose 7% (from $707 in 1987/88 to $762 in 1988/89).**
- **The benefit levels for the food allowance were increased in May, 1988.**
- **Approximately 500 transients are served each month. There was an increase in the use of financial assistance for transients in 1988/89, and an increase is expected for 1989/90 as well.**
- **Computers were placed at Department work sites, to aid in the delivery of Income Support services to Department clients. This is the first year of the LISA (Local Income Security Application) project. This project inter-connects work sites in a province-wide network. The computers will help social workers and district office staff to provide a much improved service to clients, by giving immediate access to up-to-date client information.**
- **The Eligibility and Benefit Verification project was implemented province-wide in April, 1988. The project consists of independent reviews of files and client circumstances. These reviews help to reduce fraud and errors in the system. In 1988/89 over 15,000 such reviews were conducted.**
- **The Client Reporting Card was introduced in 11 sites across the province, affecting 9,500 clients. The card ensures that clients are receiving the benefits to which they are entitled, reduces overpayments, and strengthens formal communication ties with clients.**
- **The Social Allowance program now gives financial assistance to eligible high school students. As of January, 1989, 770 high school students, aged 18 or older, were assisted by Social Services.**

Table 19
Average Monthly Social Allowance Caseload By Category, 1988/89

Number Of Clients In Client Category	NW	NE	EDM	CEN	CAL	SOU	TOTAL
Age (over 60)	247	180	1,574	284	1,242	206	3,735
Single Parent	1,755	1,386	10,009	2,754	6,474	1,699	24,076
Phys. Ill Health	658	551	3,927	1,068	2,627	583	9,413
Mental Ill Health	105	65	918	239	691	100	2,119
Employable	1,943	1,390	12,013	2,746	8,509	1,789	28,389
TOTAL:	**4,708**	**3,572**	**28,441**	**7,091**	**19,543**	**4,377**	**67,732**
Children in Need	386	316	692	239	301	138	2,072
Transients	-	-	-	-	-	-	500*

* Regional breakdown not available; number is rounded. (Note: numbers may not add up to total, due to rounding)

Table 20
Social Allowance-Disabled: Clients Receiving Social Allowance With Handicap Benefit

Region	# of Clients 1988/89	# of Clients 1987/88
Northwest	130	95
Northeast	114	80
Edmonton	658	565
Central	147	112
Calgary	544	401
South	108	90
TOTAL:	**1,701**	**1,343**

Employment Support Services to Social Allowance Recipients

This group of programs assists people receiving Social Allowance benefits to become self-sufficient, through training and employment support. Programs are offered jointly with the federal government (Canadian Jobs Strategy) or with Alberta Career Development and Employment (Employment Skills Program, Employment Alternatives Program, Alberta Business and Community Development (ABCD) or with private contractors (Job Finding Centres). Social Services either provides funding or administration to the programs, all of which are intended to help Albertans receiving Social Allowance to find employment or improve their job skills.

Employment Support Services offers employment preparation, career counselling, referral and placement in training and work experience programs. Methods of service delivery are determined by each Region.

The Employment Skills Program (ESP) pays the wages of Social Allowance recipients who have no recent work experience and who need to develop competitive work skills. It is funded by Alberta Career Development and Employment and delivered by Social Services. In 1988/89, the ESP budget was $4 million for projects of six months' duration; in September, 1988 the hourly wage increased to $6. Training costs of up to $1,000 per participant are now covered under the program.

The Employment Alternatives Program (EAP) provides private sector employees with wage and training subsidies to hire Social Allowance recipients or people whose Unemployment Insurance benefits have expired. EAP is funded by Alberta Career Development and Employment, which administers it jointly with Social Services. The program was suspended between January and March, 1988 and re-introduced in April, 1988, incorporating changes arising from the review. An increase in funding of $9 million was made to the 1987/88 budget of $12.6 million, because of program demand. The program now pays employers a subsidy of 60% of the employee's wages, to a maximum of $4 per hour, for six months. Seventy-five percent of training costs, up to $1,000 per individual, are also paid. An increased emphasis was placed on providing employment preparation and job retention support, in order to increase the success of EAP placements.

The Alberta Business and Community Development (ABCD) program supports labour-intensive, community-based projects in the public and private sectors. Alberta Career Development and Employment underwrites the wages for participants, with about $2 million of the $7.3 million budget being targeted to Social Allowance recipients. Social Services has delivery responsibility for referral of clients to approved projects.

Canadian Jobs Strategy, a federally-funded initiative, has two streams to help Social Allowance clients to find work. Job Development offers training and work experience to long term unemployable people; 20% of approved positions are committed to go to Social Services clients. In the Job Entry stream, youth and women are assisted to make the transition from school or home into the labour market, with both classroom and on-the-job training. Thirty per cent of these positions are targeted for Social Services clients. In addition, Canadian Jobs Strategy received $16 million in 1988/89 under the Canada-Alberta Accord to Enhance Employability, an increase of 150% over 1987/88. Funds are provided to develop additional services and programs for Social Allowance clients, in keeping with government commitments.

Job Finding Centres are run by private contractors and provide three weeks' instruction in job search techniques to participants, who receive a training allowance. Five job finding centres were funded during the fiscal year: two in Edmonton, two in Calgary and one in Red Deer. 1,681 people participated in the program during 1988/89.

Table 21
Social Allowance Clients Receiving Services From Employment Support Initiatives, 1988/89

Initiative	Number of Clients
Employment Alternatives Program	3,719
Canadian Jobs Strategy*	1,969
Job Finding Centres	1,681
Employment Skills Program	1,032
TOTALS:	**8,401**

* Includes participation targets, plus additional services resulting from funds diversion.

Alberta Assured Income Plan (AAIP)

AAIP provides an income supplement to seniors in Alberta who also receive federal money from the Guaranteed Income Supplement. The program provides benefits of between $10 and $95 per month, depending on the amount received from the federal program.

Forty-three percent of Alberta's senior citizens receive AAIP. Over 30% of single recipients receive maximum benefits, while less than 10% of couples require the maximum. Approximately 58% of AAIP clients are single, while 32% are couples that have both members receiving AAIP. The average monthly caseload in 1988/89 was 91,436 (up about 1% from 1987/88).

Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH)

The purpose of AISH is to provide an assured level of income, as well as drug, ambulance, optical and dental care coverage to severely and permanently disabled people, aged 18 to 64, who have little or no income. The maximum benefit in 1988/89 was $720 per month. If people are unable to meet their basic needs from the regular AISH benefits, they can apply to the Social Allowance program for handicap benefits.

Recipients living in nursing homes, auxiliary hospitals and other facilities receive a benefit known as modified AISH.

An average of 16,446 Albertans received some form of handicap benefit each month in 1988/89. This reflects an increase of 8% over 1987/88. About three quarters of straight AISH cases have no other sources of income, and therefore receive the maximum benefit of $720 per month. Most recipients are single (82%) and without dependents, and half (50%) have received AISH benefits for four years or longer.

Approximately 19% of recipients are mentally disabled and 17% are mentally ill. Recipients with congenital handicapping conditions often begin to claim benefits at the age of 18. Others come to the caseload after the age of 55, with handicapping conditions related to deteriorated mental and physical health.

Department decisions about AISH can be appealed to a citizens' review committee. More than 1,086 appeals were heard in 1988.

Highlights: AISH

- **The AISH application process was revamped to ensure that the Department obtains the information needed for an accurate eligibility decision, and to put more responsibility on the applicant to provide that information.**
- **The number of citizens appeal panels dealing with AISH was reduced and training was provided to all the AISH appeal panel members.**
- **Straight AISH recipients benefited from a new policy. The policy ensures that any cost of living increases in federal benefits (received by straight AISH recipients) will not be considered as AISH income.**

Table 22
Average Monthly Caseload- 1988/89

Region	AISH Clients	S'all with Handicap Benefits Clients	Modified Clients	Total
Northwest	929	130	38	1,097
Northeast	1,129	114	58	1,301
Edmonton	5,246	658	315	6,219
Central	1,661	147	51	1,859
Calgary	3,643	544	220	4,407
South	1,362	108	94	1,564
TOTALS	**13,970**	**1,701**	**776**	**16,447**

Widows' Pension

The purpose of the Widows' Pension program is to provide financial benefits and coverage for medical, optical and dental services to widows or widowers, aged 55 to 64, to protect them from the loss of income caused by the death of their spouse. In 1988/89, the maximum monthly benefit was $720. Three-quarters of the clients now receive their benefits through Electronic Funds Transfer, directly into their bank accounts.

About 800 Widows' Pension clients receive medical benefits and access to provincial housing subsidies only.

Approximately 45% of the clients are aged 55-59; 55% are between the ages of 60 and 64. The average monthly caseload in 1988/89 was 3,457.

Highlights: Widows' Pension

- **A pilot service to allow four financial institutions to accept Widows' Pension applications was so successful that an additional four were added, resulting in a total of 510 new locations. There are now 870 bank and credit union branches available for the program's 3,500 clients, province-wide. Staff in these institutions received training about the program and the application process.**

5. Services to Persons with Disabilites

Residential Services to Persons with Disabilities

Residential services funds or provides residential care and professional services to meet the special needs of people with disabilities. Eight provincial agencies representing people with disabilities in Alberta, were given grants for administering these programs.

The services include individual case planning; community group homes; approved homes (room and board in private homes); outreach services, to increase clients' independent living skills; institutions; and a number of support services, such as personal care attendants or training to prepare disabled people to live in the community.

Respite services are also offered to families in a time of crisis, such as when the caregiver is ill, or when the family requires a break from caring for the person with disabilities.

Highlights: Residential Services to the Disabled

- **The current services and future needs of Albertans with mental disabilities were studied by the Brassard Review Committee in 1988/89. Roy Brassard, MLA Olds/Didsbury, chaired the committee, which received submissions and held public forums throughout the province in order to gather information. Alberta Social Services is reviewing a number of its services to persons with disabilities.**
- **A "Discussion Paper on Programs and Services for Brain-Injured Persons in Alberta", produced by an interdepartmental task force, was followed by the Department's "Contingency Plan - Improving Services to Brain-Injured Albertans 1989/90" in October, 1988. Funding of $90,000 for a rehabilitation program for brain-injured people in Calgary was approved for 1988/89. The Department, together with Alberta Health, prepared a proposal for additional services for the brain-injured.**

Table 23

Profile Of Residential Support Services To Persons With Disabilities, January 1989

	NW	NE	EDM	CEN	CAL	SOU	MICH	TOTAL
Approved Home Spaces								
Adult	20	0	49	60	0	15	0	144
Group Home Spaces								
Adult	49	51	282	141	330	90	0	943
Child	22	21	36	25	30	18	0	152
Relief	5	3	14	12	18	2	0	54
Respite Services*								
Adult	pilot	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Child	0	25	9	16	**617	***53	0	720
Community Living Support Programs								
Adult	49	90	0	48	237	118	0	542
Child	0	0	0	3	8	7	0	18
Residential Facilities (Over 12 beds)								
Adult	0	0	109	0	62	52	1,201	1,424
Child	0	0	61	0	15	0	6	82
Relief	0	0	21	0	0	4	0	25
TOTALS	**145**	**190**	**584**	**305**	**1,317**	**359**	**1,207**	**4,107**

* Includes in-home and out-of-home programs.

** Days of service

*** Host family program

Table 24
Facilities Of Over 12 Beds Providing Residential Services To Persons With Disabilities, as Of January, 1989

Facility	Region	Clients Served	Spaces
Michener Centre	Central	Adult	1,162
		Child	6
Bow Park Court (operated under contract)	Calgary	Adult	13
		Child	9
Scenic Bow/Legion Group Homes (operated under contract)	Calgary	Adult	*49
		Child	6
Rosecrest	Edmonton	Child	6
		Relief	14
Eric Cormack	Edmonton	Adult	67
		Child	13
		Relief	3
Resources for the Dependent Handicapped	Edmonton	Adult	42
		Child	42
		Relief	4
Alfred Egan Home/ Bow Island	South	Adult	26
		Child	0
		Relief	4
Fort Macleod	South	Adult	26
		Child	0
		Relief	0
TOTALS:		**Adult:**	**1,385**
		Child:	**82**
		Relief:	**25**
		Total Clients:	**1,492**

* Includes 43 on-site and 6 community group homes for adults.

Employment Support Services to Persons with Disabilities

Social Services offers employment support services through two programs: Community Vocational Training Services and Government - Operated Programs. Their purpose is to provide training, skill development and job search assistance to persons with disabilities.

Community Vocational Training Services are provided by 68 regional agencies, contracted by Alberta Social Services. This system provided training support to 3,011 individuals in 1988/89, most of whom were considered mentally disabled. However, people with physical and mental health disabilities can also be included under the system. Historically, these employment services were specialized training programs for individuals not suited for general manpower vocational services. There is a move today toward individual employment support and maintenance within the regular work force.

Government-Operated Programs includes Michener Centre, which operates programs through their Vocational Services. These programs prepare residents for open or sheltered employment, through pre-vocational training, vocational training, and employment skills training.

In addition to providing employment support, Social Services coordinates a comprehensive rehabilitation program under the Canada-Provincial Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Agreement (VRDP). Services are offered through the provincial departments of Advanced Education, Career Development and Employment, Health, Social Services and the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC). The Department's role includes program coordination and administration of a cost-sharing agreement. In 1988/89, the program served 38,377 Albertans with disabilities and resulted in revenue to the Provincial Treasurer of nearly $15 million.

Table 25
Vocational Training Services: Contracted Spaces, 1988/89

Program	Contracted Spaces						
	NW	NE	EDM	CEN	CAL	SOU	Total
Developmental activity	18	23	26	35	113	6	221
Employment Preparation							
Individual Integrated	94	61	172	16	134	48	525
Group Integrated	5	10	6	22	24	16	83
Facility Based	71	119	811	164	460	294	1,919
Follow-up Goods & Services							
Supported Employment	0	13	51	35	40	0	139
Other	0	0	0	3	120	0	123
TOTAL:	**188**	**226**	**1,066**	**275**	**891**	**364**	**3,010**

Table 26
Government Operated Programs: Michener Centre, 1988/89

Type of Training	No. of Clients Served
Pre-vocational	60
Vocational	120
Employment Skills	224
TOTAL:	**404**

Public Guardian

The Public Guardian program operates under the Dependent Adults Act. This Act enables the appointment of guardians and trustees for adults who are unable to handle their own personal or financial affairs. The legislation also provides for the confinement of dependent adults who are a danger to themselves or others, in a facility that provides protection and treatment.

Individuals, usually family members, apply to the Surrogate Court for guardianship or trusteeship. Where no relative or friend is willing, able or suitable, the Public Guardian or Public Trustee may be appointed.

Where the legal costs of applying for guardianship or trusteeship would be a hardship, the court may have the Crown cover all or part of the costs. Crown costs for guardianship and joint guardianship-trusteeship hearings are paid for by the Office of the Public Guardian.

The Dependent Adults Act was originally intended to govern substitute decision-making for mentally disabled adults, in institutions or in the community. However, an increasing number of cases involve elderly people with other conditions of mental impairment. These elderly dependent adults are usually cared for in nursing homes or other institutions.

The Public Guardian does not have custody of, or provide direct care to, dependent adults. The primary service is making decisions and giving consents, mainly in the areas of health care, vocational placement, living arrangements and legal matters. The program is delivered throughout the province by professional staff located in Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary and Lethbridge.

Highlights: Public Guardian

- **An improved computerized information system was introduced during 1988/89. The system produces reports on client services, demographic projections, compliance with policies, and legal costs. These reports can be produced more quickly and more often because of faster, more efficient data processing.**

- **A system was introduced to evaluate the delivery of Community Involvement Program services, in conjunction with agencies who are contracting with the Office of the Public Guardian. The evaluation has resulted in articulating consistent expectations of agencies providing support to private guardians and the community, and provides a measure of "value for money".**

Table 27
Numbers of Applications in the Court For Guardianship, Under the Dependent Adults Act, During 1988/89

	Public	Private	Total
TOTALS:	**381**	**1,412**	**1,793**

Table 28
Dependent Adults Under Public Guardianship, 1988/89

Region	Public	Private	Total
Central/Michener	840	1,694	2,534
South/Calgary	485	1,978	2,463
North/Edmonton	460	2,587	3,047
TOTALS:	**1,785**	**6,259**	**8,044**

6. Secretariats

Senior Citizens Secretariat

The Senior Citizens Secretariat provides information and assistance in the coordination of programs and services for older people. It is headed by an MLA who reports through the Minister of Social Services.

The Secretariat gathers and provides information about aging, demographics, and the use and funding of services for elderly persons aged 65 and over, in Alberta. Information is provided to the general public, including senior citizens, community groups, institutions, and government departments and agencies. A variety of printed material is developed and distributed by the Secretariat. Approximately 1,000 inquiries are handled each month, about 50% of them are from senior citizens.

The Secretariat provides an annual operating grant to the Alberta Council on Aging, a province-wide voluntary organization. Temporary grants are also provided for research, education and special projects on aging.

The Secretariat provides staff services to the Provincial Senior Citizens Advisory Council, a government-appointed body representing the various regions of the province. The Council is chaired by the MLA responsible for the Secretariat.

Appeal and Advisory Secretariat

The Appeal and Advisory Secretariat is an autonomous body responsible to the Minister. The Secretariat establishes appeal panels to deal with various social issues. It is to this Secretariat that the people who are affected by decisions made by both Social Services staff and court rulings can bring requests to be heard, if they have concerns. The Secretariat also provides support to a variety of ministerial advisory committees.

Table 29
Appeal And Advisory Secretariat: Appeal Statistics, April 1988 - March 1989

Program	Number of Appeals	Number Reversed	%	Number Upheld	%
AISH	990	408	42	582	58
S'Allowance	8,487	4,733	56	3,754	44
Child Welfare	16	11	69	5	31
TOTAL:	**9,493**	**5,152**		**4,341**	

III. Regional Operations- Highlights

Social Services is a decentralized organization, which delivers services to its clients through six regions. At the heart of this delivery system are the 52 district offices located throughout the province. Staff in these offices provide support and assistance to Albertans in need, most often through personal contact with clients.

The Department also operates a number of institutions and residential facilities, such as those for persons with disabilities, treatment centres for troubled children, and hostels for adults. The largest institution serving the disabled is Michener Centre, in Red Deer.

The Department also makes extensive use of contracts and grants with private agencies or individuals, in order to provide a wide range of services for clients. These include psychological assessments; residential care or treatment for children with status under the Child Welfare Act; services for families, residential care for adults with disabilities; vocational training for adults with disabilities; and centres for battered women and their children. Negotiation and support of these agency-based services may come from workers in district offices or from specialists in regional offices, depending on local arrangements.

Northwest Region

The Northwest Region covers more than 40% of the province's total land area, but serves only about 10% of its population. For the most part, this Region is rural and its communities are isolated. The long distances between district offices, the sometimes harsh winter weather and the isolation of much of the Region present challenges to the staff who are delivering the Department's programs.

Highlights: Northwest Region

- **The Peace River community has developed a Human Services Advisory Committee, with representatives from all government and private service agencies. The Executive Committee meets bi-weekly and the general forum meets to share information and to plan a common strategy to deal with the anticipated population growth, that may result from the Mega Projects in Peace River and Whitecourt.**

- **A multi-departmental committee, made up of provincial, federal and private agencies working in the Wabasca/Desmarais and Back Lakes areas of the Slave Lake District, has been formed and has held quarterly discussions. As well, the Peace Arch Project, a committee comprised of Government and private employers (primarily in the oil and gas sectors), is working to increase co-ordination and local employment opportunities for Natives.**
- **LAP computers have been installed and tested in the Wabasca/Desmarais and Back Lakes areas of the Slave Lake District. This innovation was developed in the Region and allows client data to be input and retrieved by staff on location, which improves services to clients.**
- **In December, 1988, the Grande Prairie Children's Services Plan was completed. This plan was co-operatively developed by 40 community agencies and government departments. It combined original research, community input and the sharing of resources to design five different plans to meet the needs of each community. It was designed to review services to children, so as to reduce overlap and fill service gaps between the public, agency and government departments. The communities are working to accept ownership for their concerns and to provide unique cost-sharing proposals for their future needs.**

Table 30
Average Monthly Caseload Northwest Region

Services	1988/89	1987/88
Social Allowance	4,930	5,079
Social Allowance + AISH	95	95
Children in Need- Social Allowance	386	382
AISH & Modified AISH	1,030	906
Day Care Subsidy	378	402
Handicapped Children's Services	454	398
Family Relations	667	710
TOTALS:	**7,940**	**7,972**

Note: for Child Welfare statistics, see Child Welfare Services.

Northeast Region

The Northeast Region serves 166,000 people who live mainly in small towns or on farms. There are two major cities in the Region: Fort McMurray and Lloydminster. The people engage in farming in the south of the Region, oil and gas in the north and east, and forestry and tourism in the central areas. These varied economic bases, along with diverse ethno-cultural values and traditions, created the need for district offices, so that services could be provided that would respond to the varied needs of each community. In 1988/89, after a period of innovation and new activity in the first half of the year, the Region concentrated on implementing plans and monitoring results.

Highlights: Northeast Region

- **During 1988/89, the Parent Counsellor Program (established in mid-1987) expanded in St. Paul and Bonnyville to 10 parent counsellor homes, with nine adolescent placements. These placements, of mainly 13 to 18-year-olds, focus on permanency, in order to reduce foster home "drift" and to prepare the older children for independent community living.**
- **The Community Living and Community Work Placement initiative (begun in July 1987) has seen 13 mentally disabled clients move into community living arrangements (individual living or shared apartment living) and 20 clients with mental disabilities become involved in a variety of work experience/placement programs. The initiative's success was the product of considerable community effort which included hard work by the Vegreville Association for the Handicapped and the efforts of the One Hundred Ten Vocational Training Centre, and strong support from the people of Vegreville.**
- **Continued work by the Athabasca District Office and the community of Calling Lake resulted in a 70% reduction in the number of employable clients on Social Allowance between December, 1987 and December, 1988. The action taken included hiring a hamlet administrator/liaison officer, increasing job creation and training programs, and implementing welfare and local government reform.**
- **The Northeast Region, Employment and Immigration Canada and Career Connections Ltd. delivered programs which graduated 29 women from the areas of Athabasca, Vegreville and Westlock. Of these graduates, 11 are employed or have set up their own businesses; 12 are employed, but are being supplemented through Social Allowance; and four are still on full Social Allowance.**

Table 31
Average Monthly Caseload - Northeast Region

Services	1988/89	1987/88
Social Allowance	3,520	3,708
Social Allowance + AISH	114	80
Children in Need - Social Allowance	310	311
AISH & Modified AISH	1,280	1,124
Day Care Subsidy	416	413
Handicapped Children's Services	262	245
Family Relations	531	559
TOTALS:	**6,433**	**6,440**

Edmonton Region

The Edmonton Region serves the largest regional population and, with the highest client demand, offers a correspondingly large number of programs and services. The population of the Region is mainly urban, but also includes some remote rural populations.

In 1988/89, the Region reorganized, to a structure which integrates both the program and service delivery functions within each of the major program areas, namely Child Welfare, Income Support, Community Rehabilitation and Day Care. The implementation of the new management structure involved the reassignment of more than 30 managers and approximately 320 other staff and related resources. The new structure should allow more efficient use of personnel and will improve the response to the fluctuating demand for services in various parts of the Region. Clients should see improved access, quality and timeliness of services.

Highlights: Edmonton Region

- **Regional staff met every three months with Food Bank staff and volunteers under the Food Bank Liaison project. This improved communication lines and increased the consistency of services offered by the Food Bank and the Department.**
- **In conjunction with Career Development and Employment, pre-employment contracts were developed with four outside agencies. The contracts were to provide the necessary pre-employment counselling to Social Allowance clients, to enable them to find work.**
- **The Edmonton Region developed a computerized system for tracking all children placed in residential and foster care, through the Edmonton Region Placement Committee. The system identifies children in specific resources; generates a waiting list for all available resources; and generates a list of children not in their preferred placement, while identifying the preferred placement.**

- The Edmonton Region established a Native Service Advisory Committee to assist the Region in developing programs for Native children receiving services through the Department. A two day planning retreat was also held in December, 1988, which produced a series of principles, action plans and goals for the provision of Native Services in the Edmonton Region.
- In February, 1988, the Child Welfare and Community Rehabilitation programs in the Edmonton Region jointly developed the Individualized Service Planning Project. The project has been developed to assist front line Child Welfare staff in planning for children in care and for youths with disabilities. Project staff and case managers work cooperatively to develop 24-hour plans for children referred to this program.
- The Edmonton Region established a committee to address the mental health needs of children in the Region. Edmonton Region worked with Alberta Mental Health Services to conduct a study which identified children who needed mental health services, and identified the services they needed. The study looked at a representative sample of children on regional caseloads, under guardianship status, custody or support agreements. The study began in May, 1988 and a preliminary report was completed in March, 1989.
- During May and June, 1988, the Region organized conferences for both Child Welfare and Income Support staff. Conference participants included clerical staff, child welfare social workers, child welfare casework supervisors and child welfare program supervisors. Various levels of managers also attended, as group leaders, facilitators and guest speakers. The conferences, which are expected to continue annually, were held to enhance staff communication across all levels of the organization.
- The Edmonton Region completed a review of the regional foster care system. A number of significant recommendations were made for changes to the current structure and operation of the region's foster care system. The review was completed in August, 1988, and the report was selectively distributed in early spring, 1989. A regional committee has been formed to implement the review's recommendations.
- Last year's feasibility study of the Gunn Centre resulted in a number of changes, including the creation of three nursing positions, and the preparation of a cottage for guest accommodation to reunite clients with family and friends.

Table 32
Average Monthly Caseload - Edmonton Region

Services	1988/89	1987/88
Social Allowance	30,500	27,271
Social Allowance + AISH	729	565
Children in Need - Social Allowance.	728	647
AISH & Modified AISH	6,420	5,256
Day Care Subsidy	5,151	5,544
Handicapped Children's Services	1,390	1,280
Family Relations	5,145	5,461
TOTALS:	**50,063**	**46,024**

Note: for Child Welfare statistics, see Child Welfare Services.

Central Region

Through a strong commitment to community involvement and shared responsibility, Central Region has helped to develop a strong network of social and income support services, which are available to the approximately 285,000 people in the Region.

The Region's Income Support and Child Welfare caseloads have remained at approximately 10% of the provincial totals. However, cases are more complex than before, and operational expectations have increased. New initiatives have been developed to ensure that services continue to be provided effectively.

Highlights: Central Region

- **A Children's Services Coordinator was hired for the Region, to provide individualized service planning to families with children with disabilities. The aim is to help children remain at home, rather than be placed in alternate care.**
- **A County Social Worker position was established in the County of Flagstaff. The worker, based in Killam, will provide Department services to county residents, ensuring an increased Department presence and more effective services.**
- **In keeping with Central Region's commitment to service partnerships, the Region helped to establish additional school social worker projects in several communities. These projects provide school-based intervention and support services. Funding is jointly provided by the Department, local Family and Community Support Services and local school boards.**

Table 33
Average Monthly Caseload - Central Region

Services	1988/89	1987/88
Social Allowance	7,092	7,352
Social Allowance + AISH	147	112
Children in Need - Social Allowance	239	239
AISH & Modified AISH	1,661	1,533
Day Care Subsidy	888	926
Handicapped Children's Services	527	496
TOTALS:	**10,554**	**10,658**

Note: for Child Welfare statistics, see Child Welfare Services.

Calgary Region

Calgary Region has a population of approximately 730,000. It contracts with over 80 independent agencies to serve the needs of approximately 19,500 Social Allowance clients, 4,000 children and adults with disabilities, and 1,400 child welfare clients.

In 1988/89, the Region reorganized. The Child Welfare program was centralized, so that intakes and services were offered from two separate offices. Social Allowance cases were divided among four major offices in Calgary. Social Allowance sub-offices were also set up in Airdrie and Canmore.

Highlights: Calgary Region

- **The Region contracted with the National Youth In Care Group to provide a forum for the concerns or grievances of children in care to be expressed. The group consists of young adults with former child welfare status who work to develop a more informal relationship between the Department and children now in care.**
- **The Calgary Region developed protocols with the Calgary Board of Education and the City Police Department, to allow all three agencies to work more closely in providing services to children.**

Table 34
Average Monthly Caseload - Calgary Region

Services	1988/89	1987/88
Social Allowance	21,604	20,316
Social Allowance + AISH	516	401
Children in Need - Social Allowance	313	304
AISH & Modified AISH	3,984	3,623
Day Care Subsidy	3,916	4,130
Handicapped Children's Services	1,525	1,429
Family Relations	1,529	1,356
TOTALS:	**33,387**	**31,559**

Note: for Child Welfare statistics, see Child Welfare Services.

South Region

This Region has developed many innovative programs that have helped the Department to improve its services. In particular, the South Region has developed programs in Child Welfare and Native services.

The Region continued to initiate new and improved programs in 1988/89, with an emphasis on community involvement and innovation.

Highlights: South Region

- **An After Care program was introduced in the Saamis Children's Centre. The program provides pre-residential care, which offers treatment to children and their families without actually institutionalizing the children. After Care re-establishes the child in the community, with a gradual removal of services.**
- **The Department provided partial funding in October-November, 1988 for a conference on child abuse in Medicine Hat. Up to 150 members of the community, including police, lawyers, health units, paramedics, women's shelters, etc. were at the conference, which fostered a better understanding of child abuse and provided opportunities for networking in the community and throughout the South Region.**

Table 35
Average Monthly Caseload - South Region

Services	1988/89	1987/88
Social Allowance	4,763	3,674
Social Allowance + AISH	120	91
Children in Need - Social Allowance	143	85
AISH & Modified AISH	1,439	1,452
Day Care Subsidy	891	977
Handicapped Children's Services	445	425
Family Relations	786	1,213
TOTALS:	**8,587**	**7,917**

Note: for Child Welfare statistics, see Child Welfare Services.

Michener Centre

The staff of Michener Centre provide for the daily needs, activities and development of residents, through a variety of specialized services and programs.

Located in Red Deer, Michener Centre is the largest single facility operated by Social Services. It employs nearly a third of the Department's employees. The Centre provides residential care, training and professional services for 1,162 people who are developmentally disabled (resident population, as of March 31, 1989). In keeping with the Department's commitment to community living, the Centre also prepares residents for life in community settings. It encourages them to achieve the highest level of self-sufficiency of which they are capable.

Michener Centre has 41 residential units, including group homes, villas, lodges, a large dormitory and apartment-style accommodations. The recreation complex, open to the community, has three pools, a gymnasium, a theatre and an arts and crafts room. There are also academic and vocational training facilities.

Youngstown Home, a new resource base, is in Youngstown, 135 kilometres east of Drumheller. It is able to accommodate up to 50 residents who are developmentally disabled. Most of the residents have been transferred from Michener Centre. Youngstown Home has been designed to bridge the gap between institutional and community living.

Table 36
Client Data- Michener Centre, as of December, 1988

	Number of Clients
Admissions (January - December)	4
Discharges	37
Deaths	12
Relief Admissions	15
Relief Discharges	17
TOTAL	**85**

Table 37
Michener Centre - Number of Clients by Functioning Level, as of December, 1988

Functioning Level	Number of Clients
Borderline	45
Mildly Retarded	158
Moderately Retarded	241
Severely Retarded	266
Profoundly Retarded	470
TOTAL:	**1,180**

Table 38

Michener Centre - Client Source, as of December, 1988

Origin	Number of Clients
Northwest	57
Northeast	88
Edmonton	405
Central	283
Calgary	234
South	83
Out of Province	29
Wards	1
TOTAL CLIENTS:	**1,180**

IV. Support/Administration

As noted in the Department overview section, the Department is organized to deliver programs and services through six regions. It is also responsible for developing policies and procedures for the programs and services it delivers. To do this, other support services are in place for developing program policies and for financial and personnel administration.

Program Policy Development

The Program Policy Development Division has the leadership role for policy, planning and program development within the Department of Social Services. It carries out this mandate with a great deal of communication, coordination and cooperation between the service delivery and operational support staff in headquarters and the regions.

The Division has four branches, each with responsibility for specific program areas. Two additional units provide legislative and planning services. 1988/89 achievements for these branches are found elsewhere in this report, contained in the highlights section of each program area.

The Child Welfare Services Branch promotes and supports the protection of children, in accordance with the Department's legislation and priorities. Development of policies for programs such as Foster Care, Native Issues, Child Welfare Services and Adoptions are the responsibility of this Branch.

Services to Persons with Disabilities is responsible for the development of program policies which assist disabled individuals to achieve, regain or maintain financial and personal independence and self-reliance. Residential services, vocational rehabilitation and other employment support services are developed through this Branch.

Family Support Services carries the Division's responsibilities for the development and interpretation of program policy and standards in areas such as Handicapped Children's Services, Shelters for Adults, Day Care, and Family Relations (through maintenance, custody and court services). It is also instrumental in informing the public about family violence and how to prevent it.

The fourth branch, Income Support Services, provides leadership in the design, development and monitoring of the predominantly financial Income Support Services. These include: Social Allowance, Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH), Alberta Assured Income Plan (AAIP), and Widows' Pension.

Responsibility for ensuring that legal and legislative perspectives are considered in the development of Department policy is the mandate of the Legislative Planning Unit.

Planning Support assists the Division, and the Department as a whole, with planning processes and special projects. This unit also has responsibility for maintaining the Department's Business Plan, the Inventory of Services, and quarterly reporting on the Department's progress.

Together, the members of the Program Policy Development Division provide support and leadership in the ongoing development of appropriate social services for Albertans.

Resource Management Services

The Department's expenditures were $1.28 billion in 1988/89, an increase of $74 million or 6.2% over 1987/88. Department revenue, obtained principally through cost sharing agreements with the federal government, was $488 million, or approximately 38.3% of the Department's 1988/89 expenditures. An additional $14.4 million was collected by Social Services from the Government of Canada on behalf of other departments. Also, $117.5 million was collected for all departments for Extended Health Care.

Highlights: Resource Management Services

- **The Department's financial system was implemented on schedule in headquarters and the regions. Issues arising from implementation were resolved. The data entry portion of the system was enhanced to accept all financial transactions, as well as dental claims.**
- **A comprehensive contract management project was initiated to more effectively manage the $100 million the Department pays to 350 contracted agencies providing services to children, adults and families and persons with disabilities. During 1988/89, the Department issued guidelines to the staff on contract preparation; cost negotiation; and standard financial statement formats for budgeting and reporting.**

- **An agreement was signed with Alberta Blue Cross, effective October 1, 1988, to make payments to pharmacies for authorized drug benefit services provided to the Department's clients. The ability to provide better management reporting was a significant benefit.**

Personnel Services

The Personnel Services Division is responsible for the development and maintenance of Department-wide policies and systems to ensure effective human resource management. Staffing, classification, performance appraisal, benefits administration, LTDI (Long Term Disability Insurance), employee relations, manpower planning, occupational health and safety, and training and staff development services are provided through headquarters and/or regional personnel offices.

Highlights: Personnel Services

- **There were 65% more days of training delivered in 1988/89 than in the previous fiscal year. The Staff Development Branch completed "Court in Session", the first interactive videodisc developed in-house.**
- **During 1988/89, 1,832 position classifications were completed, of which 1,701 were bargaining unit and 131 management. Staffing transactions numbered 951. The reorganization of Edmonton Region proved to be a major project for the Staffing and Classification Branch.**
- **The Employee Relations Unit completed the Departmental Delegated Officers List, which detailed levels of delegated authority for management, opted out and excluded, and bargaining unit employees. Implementation of these authorities is scheduled for May 1, 1989. In-house training in employee relations commenced in early January and by fiscal year-end, a total of 10 courses had been completed.**
- **Salary Administration implemented the Absence Time Reporting System in the Department.**

V. Appendices

Appendix A: Social Services Legislation Summary

To carry out its mandate, the Department of Social Services provides programs in keeping with a number of provincial Acts. These Acts are summarized on the following pages.

The Department of Social Services Act

This Act establishes the Department of Social Services and provides for the appointment of its Deputy Minister. It empowers the Minister to make the decisions necessary to carry out the mandate of the Department. This may include the promotion of social development, the administration of social care facilities, and the provision of financial, protective, special care, or preventive/support services. The Act allows for boards and committees to be established, to advise or administer Social Services programs, as required.

Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped Act

This Act provides a maximum monthly benefit of $720 to qualifying individuals who suffer from a severe, chronic, physical or mental handicap which substantially limits their ability to earn a livelihood. It authorizes the director (appointed under the Act) to review, change or discontinue benefits and recover overpayments if the recipient's circumstances change. The director may also appoint a trustee to administer a handicap benefit on behalf of a recipient.

The Act authorizes the Minister to establish appeal panels to hear appeals from decisions of the director on any matter respecting a handicap benefit.

Child Welfare Act

This Act authorizes the Department to intervene, through the courts, where a child's survival, security or development is at risk. It provides legislative authority for adoption, private guardianship and handicapped children's services agreements. It allows for supervision and guardianship (temporary, permanent or joint) of children; and secure treatment of children experiencing mental or behavioural disorders. The Act describes grounds for Department and court intervention where a child's safety or well-being is at risk; and it provides guidelines to ensure the child's cultural heritage is respected.

The Minister is empowered, under this Act, to create appeal panels to hear appeals about the decisions of a director, made pursuant to the Act. These decisions may relate to adoption or foster placements, access, disclosure of information, refusal to enter support, custody or handicapped service agreements, etc.

Dependent Adults Act

This Act establishes the Office of the Public Guardian and provides for the appointment of guardians and trustees for dependent adults who are unable to care for themselves or exercise reasonable judgement with respect to their estates. The Act authorizes orders for the compulsory care of dependent adults, under specific circumstances, and for the purposes described in the Act. The Act defines review periods for compulsory care and trusteeship, and provides for an appeal process.

Maintenance and Recovery Act

This Act provides for the determination of paternity and payment of maintenance for children born out of wedlock. It also provides for the recovery of Social Allowance and AISH overpayments.

Under the Act, a director of Maintenance and Recovery is appointed to administer the Act, on the Minister's behalf. Enforcement of maintenance orders and agreements has been assumed by the Maintenance Enforcement Program (Department of the Attorney General). Enforcement of recovery orders and agreements is done by Social Services (Income Security Program).

Senior Citizens' Benefits Act

Provides a maximum $95 monthly supplemental benefit (through the Alberta Assured Income Plan) to qualifying Albertans. It provides for the termination of benefits and the recovery of overpayments.

Social Care Facilities Licensing Act

This Act defines and governs the licensing of social care facilities. The Act empowers a director (appointed under the Act) to inspect social care facilities, to issue work orders to correct the inadequate care or fitness of premises, and to cancel or suspend licenses for noncompliance.

The Act allows an appeal panel to review licensing disputes, and authorizes the Minister to issue stop orders in respect of the operations and activities of social care facilities.

Social Care Facilities Review Committee Act

Under this Act, the Lieutenant Governor in Council appoints a committee to visit, review and inspect social care facilities, to investigate complaints regarding care and treatment, and to make an annual report to the Legislative Assembly.

Social Development Act

This Act authorizes a director to provide Social Allowance to qualifying persons, in order to ensure that no one in Alberta lacks the goods and services essential to health and well-being.

The Act establishes rights of subrogation and the criteria for the provision of Social Allowance. It also empowers the Minister to establish appeal panels to hear the appeals of Social Allowance decisions.

Widows' Pension Act

The Act provides a maximum monthly widow's pension of $720 to qualifying widows or widowers. It ensures that widows' pension recipients are able, under other legislation, to receive health and housing benefits that senior citizens receive. The Act authorizes the Minister to alter, suspend or discontinue a widow's pension under certain circumstances; recover overpayments; appoint a trustee to administer a widow's pension on behalf of a widow; and establish appeal panels to hear appeals of decisions about a widow's pension.

Appendix B: Changes To Social Services Legislation 1988/89

Child Welfare Amendment Act, 1988

This Act creates the Office of the Children's Advocate; provides a process for private adoption, including adoption through non-profit, licensed adoption agencies; and addresses a number of procedural issues, in order to clarify the intent of the legislation and to enhance the flexibility of service. The Act received Royal Assent on July 6, 1988, but had not been proclaimed as of March 31, 1989.

Maintenance and Recovery Amendment Act, 1988

This Act removes the obligation of the Department to monitor the way maintenance payments are used by recipients. The Act came into force on July 6, 1988.

Adoption Regulation (Child Welfare Act)

This regulation, which will come into force when the Child Welfare Amendment Act, 1988 is proclaimed, regulates the licensing and operation of adoption agencies.

Income Support Programs

Amendments to the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped, Social Allowance and Widows' Pension Regulations exempt the federal sales tax credit from the determination of income under those programs.

Appendix C: Social Services Expenditures 1988/89, By Vote And Control Group ($000's)

Grand Total: Votes 1, 2 and 3 (1988/89 Actual)	
Manpower	177,743
Supplies/Services	192,038
Grants	900,229
Fixed Assets	5,122
Other	83
TOTAL:	**1,275,215**

(Source: Financial Services, Resource Management Services)

Appendix D: Social Services Expenditures 1988/89- Vote 1 ($000's)

VOTE 1	Manpower	Supplies & Svces.	Grants	Fixed Assets	Other	Total
Minister's Office	335	75	-	-	45	455
Appeal & Advisory	202	1	-	6	-	209
Deputy Minister	979	638	-	18	-	1,635
ADM-Program Pol. Devel.	726	114	-	5	-	845
ADM-Resource Mgt. Svces.	7,395	3,200	-	255	-	10,850
ADM-Personnel Services	3,489	475	-	55	-	4,019
ADM-Regional Operations	238	23	-	-	-	261
Northwest Region	1,686	771	-	94	-	2,551
Northeast Region	1,691	392	-	31	-	2,114
Edmonton Region	3,839	912	-	55	-	4,806
Central Region	2,950	424	-	45	-	3,419
Calgary Region	2,184	442	-	139	-	2,765
South Region	1,917	325	-	45	-	2,287
TOTAL - VOTE 1:	**27,631**	**7,792**	**-**	**748**	**45**	**36,216**

Appendix E: Social Services Expenditures: 1988/89-Vote 2 ($000's)

VOTE 2	Manpower	Supplies & Services	Grants	Fixed Assets	Other	Total
Appeal & Advisory	44	717	-	-	-	761
ADM-Program Policy Dev.	1,312	358	-	-	-	1,670
ADM-Resource Mgt. Svces.	1,685	3,178	68,022	3,919	-	76,804
ADM-Regional Operations	-	-	26	-	-	26
Northwest Region	2,768	236	57,287	-	-	60,291
Northeast Region	2,404	240	47,383	-	-	50,027
Edmonton Region	11,323	1,102	349,957	-	-	362,382
Central Region	3,406	374	86,928	-	-	90,708
Calgary Region	9,452	2,328	230,803	-	-	242,583
South Region	2,624	227	56,959	-	-	59,810
TOTAL - VOTE 2:	**35,018**	**8,760**	**897,365**	**3,919**	**-**	**945,062**

Appendix F: Social Services Expenditures: 1988-89 Vote 3 ($000's)

VOTE 3	Manpower	Supplies & Services	Grants	Fixed Assets	Other	Total
Appeal & Advisory	60	669	117	1	38	885
Deputy Minister	24	-	-	-	-	24
ADM-Program Policy Dev.	*5,880	1,840	1,691	49	-	9,460
ADM-Resource Mgt. Svces.	-	385	70	-	-	455
Children's Guardian	979	362	-	15	-	1,356
ADM-Regional Operations	76	121	-	5	-	202
Northwest Region	5,615	11,033	-	17	-	16,665
Northeast Region	4,742	9,683	1	12	-	14,438
Edmonton Region	31,055	50,207	-	94	-	81,356
Central Region	3,858	15,542	41	-	-	19,441
Calgary Region	15,489	55,070	6	-	-	70,565
South Region	4,926	17,528	336	10	-	22,800
Child Welfare						
Corporate	-	-	-	9	-	9
Michener Centre	42,195	12,962	358	243	-	55,758
Senior Citizens Secretariat	195	84	244	-	-	523
TOTAL - VOTE 3:	**115,094**	**175,486**	**2,864**	**455**	**38**	**293,937**

* Includes Office of the Public Guardian ($2,493,000)